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ABSTRACT

Unique economic, social, and cultural conditions explain why Japan, as one of the leading industrialized nations, has no organization which specializes in or is concerned with development education. Contributing factors are: (1) economic success is so recent (late 1960's) that people are involved internally enjoying hard won affluence; (2) geographical isolation and homogeneous culture have prevented an international outlook; (3) with no immigrant workers, Japan, itself, has no development education problems; (4) monolingualism has insulated the country from international change; (5) no Japanese language translation exists for the term, development education; (6) the diminished social role of religion has reduced voluntary charitable organizations concerned with the poor; (7) the "vertical" nature of social relations does not cultivate respect and compassion towards others; (8) no specialized government department administers development cooperation; (9) the educational system does not foster compassionate concern for others. Phenomena that may favorably affect development education in Japan include: availability, since 1974, of booklets (list appended) describing Japan's development cooperation; overseas 16-30 day teacher education trips that will influence potential development education leaders; mass media efforts exposing problems of developing nations; and organizations (list appended) now engaged in international education that could encompass development education activites. (NEC)

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DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

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Development Education
Paper No. 12

DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND JAPAN

By Dr. Osamu Muro*

1980

1. This paper is prepared as a kind of position paper and is attempted to analyze fundamental questions that seem to be underlying development education (hereafter referred to as "dev/ed") in Japan. It also is intended to illustrate certain positive factors for initiating dev/ed in the country.

2. Compared with other industrialized nations in the present world, Japan, which is now regarded as one of the greatest economic powers along with the United States and the European community, definitely lags far behind as far as dev/ed is concerned. This is clearly found, for example, in the IYC Discussion Papers prepared by the IYC Secreatariat in Europe. Why, among the industrialized nations of today, has Japan no organization which is specialized in, or concerned with, dev/ed? The answer to this question would be found in the following economic, social and, above all, cultural conditions that are almost unique to Japan.

3. To begin with, one should not overlook the fact that unlike most of the industrialized or "developed" countries in Europe and North America, Japan remained "poor" until relatively recently. It is only since the late 1960s that the country has emerged as one of the "rich" countries. In their struggle to reconstruct their war-devastated economy, the Japanese as a whole have been pre-occupied with the nation's economic recovery and development - too pre-occupied to think of the problems and difficulties of the peoples of other countries. Having succeeded in its struggle for economic development, Japan may be said to be an "up-start" in the international community. Its people are busy enjoying their hard-won affluency, though their way of doing so can hardly be said to be very respectable. As any up-start person will in time begin to feel his responsibility towards his community, if only to earn the respect due his wealth, Japan too will gradually be awakened to its international responsibilities as a "rich"

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nation. And the writer is inclined to believe that the time is now ripe for the nation's awakening.

4. Secondly, the Japanese, who have been living on a small archipelago and thus physically isolated from the rest of the world, have developed a highly homogeneous national culture, and are by nature less international in their mental outlook than most of the peoples of other industrialized - or even less industrialized - nations. This is not to say that the Japanese are disinterested in international affairs. On the contrary, they harbour a strong sense of curiosity about other parts of the world, perhaps more than other nationalities. But the interest of the Japanese people in world affairs is limited to those societies which they have traditionally regarded as more advanced than their own (e.g., Europe and North America), or otherwise to the events and incidents that are likely to affect their national security (e.g., military strength of a neighbouring country) or their national economy (e.g., the oil crisis). The general public of Japan are not so much interested in such international or global problems as the absolute poverty of hundreds of millions of the population who live in the Third World countries, since they do not affect their own life within Japan - although these problems are bound to affect their life in the long run.

5. The strong homogeneity of Japanese society has more direct bearing on dev/ed in the country. Because of the ethnic homogeneity, no immigrant workers from economically less-developed countries have been admitted to Japan. As is well known, immigrant workers from less affluent societies with different cultures than that of the host country often create "North-South" problems within each industrialized society, which necessitate dev/ed as a means to help solve them. In fact many indutrialized countries have these "North-South" problems in one form or another, and thus dev/ed is an issue which is more than an abstract one. With no immigrant workers, the "North-South" problem simply does not exist within Japan. Its problems are conceived only in relation to other countries.

6. Fourth, the problem of language barriers. As the Japanese do not really need to know other languages than Japanese as long as they remain in the country, it is almost inevitable that average Japanese citizens are poor in acquiring foreign languages. It is also inevitable, therefore, that the Japanese as a whole are rather slow in becoming aware of the changes that are taking place in the international community. This situation differs greatly from, say, western European society, where many people are by necessity bi-lingual or even multi-lingual, and especially from such English-speaking countries as the United States, U.K., Canada, Australia and New Zealand where flow of information between the peoples is very quick. The writer is intrigued to speculate the number of Japanese people who have ever perused the IYC Discussion Papers. His guess is no more than ten people at the most out of 115 million population.

7. Then there further exists a terminological problem as far as dev/ed is concerned. In Japan where the people have been - and still are - eager to pursue economic and technological development, "KAIHATSU" ("development")

is a word which carries a somewhat different meaning from that of "development" in the sense the English term is generally used these days among the people who are concerned with development issues. A typical interpretation of KAIHATSU in Japan would be "to demolish forested hills, level them and turn into an industrial complex" or "to devise a new technology". There of course is a Japanese word for "education": "KYOIKU". But when the two Japanese words are combined into "KAIHATSU-KYOIKU" (i.e. "development education"), the phrase sounds rather strange to the general public. (In fact, when the writer referred to KAIHATSU-KYOIKU to the officials of the Ministry of Education, who were the staff of the Japanese National Commission for Unesco, none of them comprehended what was meant by the term - an indication that they were not yet familiar with the original term of "development education", much less its Japanese translation). For sheer lack of any other appropriate translations, however, this new term of KAIHATSU-KYOIKU should perhaps be used and disseminated to mean dev/ed in this country.

8. Another factor which the writer believes is responsible for the absence of dev/ed in Japan is found in the country's culture. Unlike most other countries, in Japanese society of today, religion (Buddhism) has lost its social role as a means to spiritual education for the people. Such human virtues as compassionate feeling towards less fortunate members of the society and sharing with other human beings as brethrens, which every established religion teaches, are not very strong among the Japanese. To help the deprived and unfortunate is generally considered the responsibility of the government in Japan. Accordingly, there are very few charity organizations of a voluntary nature committed to the welfare of the deprived and unfortunate in the country. Since dev/ed is concerned with the problems of other countries than those of Japanese people, it is by no means very strange if there is no NGO specialized in dev/ed in Japan. (It is very interesting to note, in this connection, that the Christians who constitute a very small minority in the country are more seriously concerned with the plight of the deprived people, not only within Japan but also in developing countries).

9. By virtually lacking strong religious societies as agents of spiritual or moral education and social welfare service, human relations in Japan are governed by a strong sense of belonging to a group or an institution, which has been fostered through the nation's long history, particularly during the feudal ages (which lasted until as late as the mid-19th century). Thus, loyalty to the group or institution to which one belongs - whether it is a government office or a business corporation, or more likely one's immediate superior ---- is considered more virtuous than one's solidarity with other members of the group. At the same time, a respectable superior is identified as a person who shows a paternalistic and patronizing warmth towards his subordinates. In short, human relations in Japanese society are of a "vertical" rather than "horizontal" nature. In Japan it is not easy to cultivate a sense of respect and compassion towards other people as equal partners even among the Japanese nationals themselves, let alone toward the peoples of other parts of the world. (Even Japan's international cooperation - which is typically termed "economic cooperation" in the country - does not seem to be entirely free from this vertical mentality; many of those directly concerned with development cooperation tend to suffer from their own superiority complex of a sort and to expect the recipient people to be grateful to Japan). If, as the writer believes, dev/ed should be based on a new philosophy of solidarity with the peoples of the world as "co-crew members of the Spaceship Earth", Japanese society of today does not provide it with a very favourable milieu.

10. As has been indicated earlier in the paper (2 and 3), Japan, who is a late comer to the arena on international development cooperation, still remains somewhat backward in its cooperation with the Third World countries. Because of the nation's own economic scale and large population size, however, Japan's official development assistance (ODA) has grown in the last few years and now ranks the third among the OECD/DAC member countries, only after the U.S.A. and France. Yet in terms of its ration to gross national product (GNP), Japan's rank falls to the fifteenth among the DAC members. Then, in spite of its large amount of ODA, at least in terms of absolute figures, in Japan there still is no independent government department (ministry or autonomous agency) exclusively concerned with the nation's development cooperation. At present, Japan's official development cooperation is administered not only by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through the Economic Cooperation Bureau), but also by a number of government authorities, including the Ministries of International Trade and Industry, of Agriculture and Fishery, of Transportation, of Construction, of Finance, the Economic Planning Agency --- in fact, practically by all ministries. Since it usually is the ministry or authority specialized in development cooperation which encourages dev/ed by channeling official funds to NGOs that are striving for dev/ed in other developed countries, * the absence of a specialized government department in Japan presents a very serious practical problem in the country.

11. Last, but by no means the least, there is a problem of formal education. Formal education in Japan is supposedly directed by the Fundamental Law of Education enacted in 1947. While the philosophy of this law is an extremely sound and enlightened one, the law has actually remained a dead document, since school education in the country has been distorted to a sheer means to preparatory learning for students to pass entrance exams at each educational level. Parents as well as school teachers seem only concerned with that goal, forcing the children to scramble for absorbing sterile information throughout their school life. Thus Japanese school education is haunted by an atmosphere of cut-throat competition and rivalry, which foster only egoistic attitudes among the learners. Even the sense of friendship between class-mates is hardly cultivated. It is therefore little wonder why the Japanese do not feel compassionate concern towards the peoples of other lands. Dev/ed has to be introduced into this sort of school education in Japan.

* *

12. As the foregoing parts of the present paper have indicated, the present Japanese society - or culture - can hardly be fertile soil for dev/ed to be promoted. But society and culture cannot remain static; they always change, if slowly. It is the writer's view, in this connection, that the Japanese are a people who can change their way of thinking rather quickly, if they are convinced that such change is to their interest. And as far as the issues of dev/ed are concerned, there already are some interesting phenomena that may favourably affect dev/ed in the country. These are briefly described.

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* The Ministry of Economic Cooperation in Germany, the Ministry (Authority) of Overseas Development in U.K., The Ministry of Development Cooperation in the Netherlands, and the Swedish International Development Authority, just to mention a few.

13. First, since 1974 a few booklets dealing with Japan's development cooperation or development issues - which are understood as "North-South" problems in the country - have been published. Chronologically they are listed as Appendix I of this paper. These publications are printed in colour and attractively laid out, full of illustrations and charts. They were made available by public funds in one way or another, and usually distributed free of charge except two booklets published by APIC, which were priced and partly sold to the public. According to APIC some 20,000 copies of each of the two booklets were sold to various organizations, mostly business corporations. (It is typical of Japanese society to find that APIC's two excellent booklets, which were purchased by many business circles, were not sold to school teachers.) As it is, each of the booklets listed in the Appendix is very useful for dev/ed, although very few educators and teachers seem to be aware of the publications, and fewer have utilized them in schools.

14. Since 1959 the Ministry of Education had been sending hundreds of teachers of public schools overseas every year. In 1975 the number was increased dramatically to 5,000 per year. The school teachers selected by the Ministry and recommended by local boards of education are sent to different parts of the world for 16 - 30 days, "in order to help them broaden their international outlook." Out of 5,000 some 500 are to be sent to some Asian countries, the rest being sent to Europe and North and South America. Some of those sent to Asian countries may be counted as potential members of a dev/ed group, if such a group is formed in the future.

15. Whereas the concept of dev/ed per se may not be conceived as yet, it is both interesting and encouraging to note that mass-communication media of Japan have increasingly become interested in exposing the general public to the difficulties and different cultures of developing nations, and in informing them of the issues of international development. The five major newspapers which enjoy nation-wide circulation, namely, Asahi, Yomiuri, Mainichi, Nihon-Keizai and Sankei (their numbers of daily circulation range from 6,500 to 12,000,000) are particularly active in this connection. So are NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) and even some commercial television networks. Some of these mass-communication media often cooperate with certain UN agencies in informing the Japanese people of problems of developing countries. For example NHK has been actively cooperating with UNICEF, while Asahi Shimbun is publishing UNDP's information on development issues. Many of the articles of the newspapers as well as the films or video tapes from TV networks can be highly useful teaching materials in schools for dev/ed.

16. Thirdly, there are in Japan a few groups of teachers or educational organizations that are engaged in international education in one sense or another, if not in dev/ed per se. These groups and organizations are listed as Appendix II. It would be possible for them to become increasingly interested in dev/ed in the future, if the proper approach could be made. At the present time, there seems no coordination - let alone collaboration among the groups, which in itself is one of the cultural characteristics of Japanese society. What is required is coordination - better still, collaboration - among organizations with similar objectives. It is hoped that the envisaged group of people who are committed to dev/ed in the country will serve as a coordinating body, perhaps inducing other existing groups to become awakened in the urgent need for dev/ed, rather than as ANOTHER rivaling organization to any of them.

17. Before bringing this paper to an end, the writer should like to make some action proposals to facilitate dev/ed in Japan. One is to send selected school teachers (preferably relatively young) to some of the developing countries with the explicit purpose of exposing them to the realities of human life in those countries. It is suggested that they be encouraged to stay in rural areas in each country visited, instead of staying in the capital city and doing sightseeing as in the case of the present tours organized by the Ministry of Education. It is suggested, too, that as far as possible Asian LDCs be considered as the countries to be visited.

18. Another proposal is to send selected school teachers to carefully selected industrialized countries where dev/ed is actively pursued. Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Canada, U.K. and Australia seem to be appropriate in this connection. As the Japanese have a tradition of looking towards European and North American countries as examples for them to follow, this kind of approach may prove even more effective than the study tour of LDCs, at least at the beginning. And it must be repeated here, in this connection, that Japan - a nation whose level of education is generally regarded as very high - still lags far behind those countries mentioned above as far as dev/ed is concerned.

19. The writer believes that the concept of dev/ed itself has changed from that in the early 1970s. Dev/ed should no longer be an education based merely on the feeling of "sympathy" - i.e. on paternalism - towards the people of the Third World; rather it should be derived from a more enlightened view that all human beings will have to live together in peace by sharing the precious - often unreproduceable - resources of the earth more equally. In this sense, the oil crisis created by OPEC since 1973 (however painful it has been to the peoples of the highly - indeed, excessively - industrialized societies, including Japan among others) is likely to serve as a triggering factor for initiating and disseminating dev/ed in the country. Since the shortage of fossil energy brought about by OPEC is beyond Japanese control, the people of Japan are bound to become more international-minded, whether they like it or not. In short, the way of thinking of the Japanese, which has so far been limited to their own interest alone, has to change - and in fact seems to be changing, if belatedly. Dev/ed in Japan will find better ground than it has in the past.

Appendix I

Booklets of Interest*
(Referred to under 13)

NANBOKU-MONDAI-O-KANGAEYOH (Let's Consider North-South Problems), 48 pages, 1974
Edited by the Bureau of Information and Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and published by SEKAI-NO-UGOKI-SHA **

ME-DE-MIRU-NANBOKU-MONDAI (North-South Problems Visually Presented), 70 pages, ¥680, 1976.

ME-DE-MIRU-GIJUTSU-KYORYOKU (Technical Cooperation Visually Presented), 70 pages ¥680, 1977
Both edited by VIEW-PRO Corp. under the guidance and supervision of the Bureau of Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and published by the Association of Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC)

KEIZAU-KYORYOKU-TOWA-NAANI? (What Is Economic Cooperation?), 18 pages, 1977
Edited and published by the Council of Economic Cooperation under the guidance of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry

YUTAKASA --- KAIHATSU-KYORYOKU-RIKAI-NO-SUSUME (Affluence --- Let's Understand Development Cooperation), 18 pages, 1977
Compiled and published by Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)

NANBOKU-MONDAI-TO-NIHON (North-South Problems and Japan), 40 pages, 1979
Compiled and published by the Bureau of Information and Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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* Except those which are priced all are for free distribution.

** A private company which publishes a monthly magazine "SEKAI-NO-UGOKI" (Trends and Events of the World) which is edited by the Bureau of Information and Culture of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Appendix II

Groups and Organizations
(Referred to under 16)

Unesco-Associated Schools

They include four primary, eleven secondary and eight high schools. Technically supported by Unesco, these twenty-three schools do not have any formal organization to which they belong. However, both the teachers and students of these schools meet every year and exchange their experiences and opinions on education for international understanding. The meeting which takes place during summer holidays is sponsored by the National Federation of Unesco Associations in Japan (NFUA/J) which in turn is subsidized by the Ministry of Education through the National Commission for Unesco.

ZENKOKU-KOTOHGAKKO-KAIGAI-KYOIKU-KENKYU-KYOGIKAI (Japanese High School Association for International Education or JAHAIE) *

Organized in 1964 with an implicit purpose of encouraging high school students to emigrate into certain Latin American countries and for that purpose to provide them with information on potential recipient countries, JAHAIE was tacitly supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Overseas Emigration Division) and assisted both financially and technically by the Ministry of Education (Bureau of Primary and Secondary Education). Since then, however, many of the member high schools - and their students - have gradually grown less interested in emigration, but more concerned with the problems of developing countries in general, thus increasingly being involved in "dev/ed" without knowing it by name. At the beginning of fiscal 1979 (April 1st) 1,358 high schools were affiliated with JAHAIE. A number of high school students of the member-schools participated in an annual essay contest sponsored by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on such themes as "emigration" and "international cooperation".

KOKUSAI-HIEWA-KYOKAI (Japan International Peace Research Association or JIPRA)

Originally founded in 1946 by the late Toyohiko Kagawa, a renowned evangelist, JIPRA is the oldest organization concerned with international understanding in Japan. Its present President is ex-Prime Minister Takeo Miki, and Chief Executive Director is MP Tokuyasu Fukuda who is an active member of One World Trust/Parliamentary Group for World Government headquarters in London. As its name suggests, JIPRA appears to have been concerned with securing world peace, taking up such issues as disarmament and anti-nuclear ones. It publishes a monthly bulletin entitled "KOKUSAI-HEIWA-KENKYU-REPOHTO (Report on International Peace Research)", which is circulated among school teachers, most of them at high school level. JIPRA also organizes an annual essay contest for high school students to which some 3,000 are reported to enter every year. The major theme of this year's essay contest is "In Search of Solidarity of Global Citizens" and applicants are suggested to write on one of the following three sub-themes: 1) "Respect to Human Rights"; 2) "Cross-Cultural Understanding"; or 3) "Cooperation with International Organizations". JIPRA organizes from time to time regional (sub-national) seminars on peace issues, in which many of the participants are school teachers.

* As is often the case in Japan, the English title is not a faithful translation of the Japanese title, which actually means "National Federation of High Schools for Research on Overseas Education".

NIHON-HEIWA-GAKKAI (Peace Studies Association of Japan or PSAJ):

Founded in 1973 by some academic people, PSAJ is reported to embrace some 300 individual members, including university professors, school teachers and others. Like JIPRA, PSAJ also appears to be concerned with political and military problems that threaten peace. PSAJ organizes workshops on peace studies and publishes "HEIWA-KENKYU" (Peace Studies) every year. PSAJ may become more interested in dev/ed, since poverty and injustice in the Third World countries are considered potential causes of war, especially when its president is now Prof. Jun Nishikawa of Waseda University who is one of the few social scientists who are well informed of, and seriously concerned with, development issues in the country.

KOKUSAI-RIKAI-KYOIKU-KENKYUSHO (Institute of Education for International Understanding):

Founded in 1971 as an autonomous institution attached to Tetsukayama University in Osaka Prefecture, this Institute has been active in promoting education for international understanding, by organizing youth meetings, awarding prizes to outstanding research papers on international understanding, and publishing a periodical called "KOKUSAI-RIKAI"(International Understanding). The Institute has been supporting the Unesco-Associated Schools in Japan. It is financed, at least partly, by a number of business corporations in Osaka, the second largest city in Japan, which is known as a commercial centre in the country. Present president of the Insitute is Prof. Eiji Kon-no of Tetsukayama University.

DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

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HOW TO GET UNICEF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION MATERIALS

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A 12-picture photo (2x3 foot) exhibit with captions. English or French.

The World in a Chocolate Bar $1.00
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